

Message Text

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CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 L-02 SP-01 EA-13

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O 222122Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9380

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 12533

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, VS

SUBJECT: FRANCO-PRG RELATIONS

REF: PARIS 11937

SUMMARY: AS HE HAD PROMISED (REFTEL), QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA (INDOCHINA) BOLLE CALLED IN EMBOFF TO GIVE DETAILS CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRG PERMANENT MISSION IN FRANCE, WHICH WAS ANNOUNCED BY THE PRG IN PARIS MAY 22. BOLLE EMPHASIZED THAT FRANCE HAD REFUSED NOT ONLY FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BUT ALSO ACCREDITATION AND RIGHT TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER, WHICH THE PRG HAD PREVIOUSLY INSISTED UPON. BOLLE SAID THE DETAILS BELOW SHOULD BE CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL. DESPITE FRENCH EFFORTS TO DOWNPLAY THE CHANGE, THE PRG CAN BE RELIED UPON TO EXPLOIT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MISSION BOTH INTERNATIONALLY AND LOCALLY. END SUMMARY

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA (INDOCHINA) BOLLE, CALLED IN EMBOFF MAY 22 TO GIVE PARTICULARS CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRG PERMANENT MISSION IN FRANCE. HE SAID DETAILS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL.

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BOLLE SAID THAT THE NEWS REPORT WHICH WAS CLOSEST TO THE

ACTUAL FACTS WAS THE UPI REPORT FROM PARIS OF MAY 22. HE UNDERLINED THAT SOME OF THE AFP STORIES CONTAINED INACCURACIES DERIVED FROM THE PRG OR CREATED BY AFP ITSELF. BOLLE EMPHASIZED THAT THERE WAS NO "JOINT COMMUNIQUE"; THERE WAS MERELY THE UNILATERAL PRG COMMUNIQUE. HE SAID THERE WAS NO JOINT DOCUMENT OF ANY KIND WHICH WAS INITIALED OR SIGNED BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS FOLLOWING THE AGREEMENT WHICH EMERGED FROM THEIR CONVERSATIONS. OBVIOUSLY EACH SIDE HAD ITS OWN NOTES ON THE CONVERSATIONS (BOUT DE PAPIER), BUT THERE WERE NO JOINT DOCUMENTS. AS THE COMMUNIQUE INDICATED, THE GOF DID NOT CONSIDER THAT THERE HAD BEEN FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PRG, BUT MERELY THAT AN AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED FOLLOWING "CONVERSATIONS".

2. AS THE COMMUNIQUE NOTED, CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE PRG OPENED AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT. THESE CONVERSATIONS WERE BASED ON A DE FACTO RELATIONSHIP WHICH FRANCE AS THE HOST GOVERNMENT HAD ESTABLISHED WITH THE DELEGATION OF EACH OF THE 4 PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE. DURING THE 4 YEARS OF THE CONFERENCE, THE PRG DELEGATION HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER, AS HAD THE CHIEFS OF OTHER DELEGATIONS. WITH THE CONTINUATION OF TALKS BETWEEN THE GVN AND THE PRG AT THE CELLE ST. CLOUD, FRANCE HAD "OF COURSE CONTINUED THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS" BETWEEN THE HOSTS AND ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THESE CONVERSATIONS. BOLLE COMMENTED THAT FRANCE'S GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE PRG HAD PROBABLY BEEN USEFUL DURING THE PARIS CONFERENCE AND ALSO DURING THE CELLE ST. CLOUD TALKS.

3. THE GOF HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PRG "PERMANENT MISSION" WOULD NOT BE AT THE SAME LEVEL AS THE GVN EMBASSY. THE PRG OBVIOUSLY REGRETTED THAT IT WAS UNABLE TO GET A STATUS EQUAL TO THAT OF THE GVN OR AT LEAST THAT WHICH THE DRV HAD ENJOYED PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, THAT IS "DELEGATION GENERALE". THE "PERMANENT MISSION" WAS THEREFORE CONSIDERABLY BELOW WHAT THE PRG HAD HOPED FOR OR WHAT THE DRV HAD REQUESTED ON THE PRG BEHALF. BOLLE UNDERLINED THAT THE FULL TITLE

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WAS "MISSION PERMANENTE DU GOUVERNEMENT REVOLUTIONNAIRE PROVISoire DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU SUD VIETNAM EN (RPT EN) FRANCE". GOF HAD REFUSED THE FORMULATION "AUPRES DU GOUVERNEMENT FRANCAIS". THE NAME THEREFORE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO ACCREDITATION TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AT ANY LEVEL. IT WAS ALSO CLEAR, THEREFORE, THAT IT WAS NOT A QUESTION OF A "STEP TOWARD NORMAL RELATIONS". BOLLE NOTED THAT IT WAS PERFECTLY ORDINARY

TO NOTE THAT THEIR CONTACTS WOULD BE WITH THE MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS; BUT IT WAS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE
REFERENCE WAS NOT TO CONTACTS WITH THE "MINISTER OF

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS".

4. BOLLE NOTED THAT THE PRG PRESS RELEASE HAD INDICATED
THE HEAD OF THE MISSION HAD THE TITLE OF AMBASSADOR. HE
INSISTED THAT THE GOF WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY SUCH DIPLOMA-
TIC TITLE, REGARDLESS OF THE PREVIOUS POSITIONS WHICH THE
HEAD OF THE MISSION MIGHT HAVE HELD. HE ALSO NOTED THAT
THE HEAD OF THE MISSION WAS THE PERSON WHO FOR SOME
YEARS HAD ALREADY BEEN "ON THE SPOT" AS HEAD OF THE
INFORMATION OFFICE. THE MISSION HEAD, PHAM VAN BA, WILL
NOT BE CONSIDERED A MEMBER OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND
WILL NOT BE INVITED TO DIPLOMATIC RECEPTIONS. MEMBERS
OF THE MISSION WILL BENEFIT FROM CERTAIN ADVANTAGES
WHICH THE FRENCH CONSIDER "SPECIAL PRIVILEGES". THE
GOF WISHES TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THESE ARE NOT THE NORMAL
DIPLOMATIC RIGHTS AS DEFINED BY THE CONVENTION OF
VIENNA. THESE "SPECIAL PRIVILEGES" ARE GRANTED ON A DE
FACTO BASIS FOR SOME PERSONS WITHOUT DIPLOMATIC STATUS,

JUST AS THEY ARE IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES. THEY ARE
DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE THE PROBLEMS WHICH THESE PERSONS
MAY ENCOUNTER ON FRENCH TERRITORY.

5. BOLLE DREW PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE AFP COMMENT
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WHICH WAS DRAWN FROM QUAI SOURCES. FRANCE RECOGNIZES
ONLY "STATES". FRANCE DOES NOT WISH TO SANCTION THE
DIVISION OF SOUTH VIETNAM--NOR TO ENCOURAGE A THIRD
VIETNAM, BUT HOPES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS
AGREEMENTS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S QUESTIONS, BOLLE SAID THAT
UNLIKE THE CASE OF THE PRV DELEGATION GENERALE, THERE
WOULD BE NO REQUEST FOR AGREEMENT OR LETTERS OF ACCREDITA-
TION FOR ANY MEMBER OF THE PRG MISSION. (FOR THE DRV
DELEGATION GENERALE IN FRANCE, THE DRV HAD INFORMED THE
GOF AND THE DELEGATE GENERALE HAD BEEN ACCREDITED TO
THE FRENCH PRIME MINISTER.) THE MEMBERS OF THE PRG
MISSION (WHICH WOULD CONSISTS OF 5 OFFICERS) WOULD HAVE
NORMAL DIPLOMATIC CARDS; THE HEAD OF THE MISSION, UNLIKE
THE HEAD OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, WOULD NOT HAVE THE
SPECIAL WHITE DIPLOMATIC CARD. THE PRG AUTOMOBILES WOULD
HAVE CD PLATES BUT THE HEAD OF THE MISSION WOULD NOT
HAVE THE RIGHT TO CMD PLATES. THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE CHANGE IN PRG STATUS, BUT THE
MFA DID NOT KNOW WHAT MIGHT BE THE CHANGES IN SECURITY
PROCEDURES. ALTHOUGH THE HEAD OF THE MISSION COULD
PRESUMABLY REQUEST TO SEE THE FOREIGN MINISTER IT WAS
BASICALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT MOST CONTACTS WOULD BE AT THE
"WORKING LEVEL" THAT IS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF ASIA,
FROMENT-MEURICE, OR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BOLLE. AS TO
THE GOF ACCEPTANCE OF PRG PASSPORTS, THIS MATTER HAS NOT
YET BEEN RESOLVED. UP TO NOW VISAS WERE PLACED INTO
DRV PASSPORTS HELD BY PRG OFFICIALS, BUT THE VISAS WERE
PLACED ON A SEPARATE PIECE OF PAPER WHEN PRG DOCUMENTA-
TION WAS PRESENTED. THIS PROBLEM WILL NO DOUBT BE DIS-
CUSSED FURTHER. A PRG REPRESENTATIVE WILL BE IDENTIFIED
ON ALL DIPLOMATIC CARDS AS "MEMBERS OF THE MISSION"
WITHOUT ANY DIPLOMATIC TITLE. IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT
THE PRG FLAG CAN BE FLOWN AT THE CHANCERY ON CERTAIN DAYS
WHICH HAD BEEN AGREED TO BY THE GOF; THE GOF HAD NOT
PERMITTED THEM TO FLY THE FLAG ON THE RESIDENCE OF THE
HEAD OF MISSION SINCE THIS WAS A RIGHT USUALLY RESERVED
FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE OF A CHIEF OF STATE RECOGNIZED
BY THE GOF. BOLLE REPEATED THAT THE MISSION WOULD HAVE

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NO CONSULAR RESPONSIBILITIES.

6. BOLLE SAID THAT THE PRINCIPLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MISSION AND A "DELEGATION GENERALE" WAS THAT THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF ACCREDITATION TO THE GOF OR OF RIGHT TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER. THIS VERY SPECIAL STATUS SHOULD THEREFORE NOT PROVIDE A PRECEDENT WHICH ANY OTHER COUNTRY SHOULD FEEL IT COULD FOLLOW SINCE NO OTHER COUNTRY HAD HAD THE 4 YEARS OF SERVING AS HOST FOR THE PARIS CONFERENCE, YEARS DURING WHICH THE GOF HAD HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE PRG AS WITH THE OTHER 3 PARTICIPANTS. BOLLE ALSO CONSIDERED THE MOVE WOULD PROVIDE VERY LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE PRG AND DRV; THE DRV CHARGE D'AFFAIRES HAD GRUDGINGLY CHARACTERIZED IT AS A "VERY SMALL STEP". BOLLE ALSO THOUGHT THAT IT WAS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER HANOI WOULD CONSIDER THIS STEP ADEQUATE TO PROMPT A REQUEST FOR AGREEMENT FOR A DRV AMBASSADOR TO PARIS. THE DRV HAD ALREADY COMPLAINED

OF A "LACK OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL" FOR THE POST
AND MIGHT CONTINUE TO DELAY.

7. COMMENT: THE FRENCH OBVIOUSLY BELIEVE THAT THE NEW
STATUS WHICH THEY HAVE ACCORDED TO THE PRG IS A VERY
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SMALL STEP, ONE BASICALLY CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE TO ALL
FOLLOWING THE SIGNATURE OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS. THEY
BELIEVE IT IS A MINIMUM GESTURE GIVEN THE RELATIONSHIP
THEY HAD WITH THE PRG DURING THE YEARS OF THE PARIS
CONFERENCE, AND THEIR ROLE AS HOST FOR THE CURRENTLY
ADJOURNED CELLE ST. CLOUD GVN/PRG BILATERALS. ALTHOUGH
WE CAN PROBABLY RELY ON THE GOF TO CONTINUE TO CORRECT
ANY GROSS PRG DISTORTIONS, THE COMMUNIST PRESS, WITH THE
ASSISTANCE OF SOME OF THE REST OF THE WORLD PRESS, WILL
NO DOUBT PLAY THE CHANGE AS VERY IMPORTANT, PARTICULARLY
IMPORTANT AS INDICATING THE DIRECTION IN WHICH PRG
RELATIONS WITH FRANCE AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES WILL
DEVELOP. IN ADDITION THE PRG MISSION CAN BE RELIED
UPON TO EXPLOIT THE ENHANCED STATUS TO THE MAXIMUM
LOCALLY, FOR EXAMPLE AT THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
JUNE 6.
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